

Title: *The Cost of Knowing*
Author: Brittney Morris
Genre: Science Fiction

Reviewer Name and Grade: Yujay A., 10th Grade

Date Reviewed: March 27, 2022

Alex Rufus is a sixteen year old African American teen who lives in a gated community outside Chicago with his aunt and younger brother Isaiah. Alex's parents died in a car accident when Alex was younger, which is why Alex and his brother live with their aunt. After the accident, Alex gained the ability to see the future of anything he touches. Alex has visions of the future of the object or person for as long as he touches them, although he has learned how to cancel the visions right after they begin. This makes everyday tasks such as working the register at the ice cream shop he works at or having a normal time with his girlfriend Talia difficult. Alex has learned that any attempt to change the future will be meaningless and views his visions as a curse as they cause him to be constantly anxious. A couple years after his parents passed away, Alex's best friend Shaun died in another accident. However, Alex saw this coming when he touched Shaun. Knowing that he was helpless to do anything, he cut himself off from Shaun during the days leading up to the inevitable accident. Alex is not close to his brother, as they grew distant after the death of their parents and Shaun. One day, after work, Alex touches a photo and has a vision of his brother's nearing death. Alex suddenly feels the pressure to restore his relationship with his brother. Isaiah sits in his room all day, eating and making music, and almost never speaks to Alex. Alex does not want to make the same mistake he made with Shaun and wants to spend as much time as possible with Isaiah before he dies. At first, Isaiah is cold towards Alex and does not want to spend time with him. However, they soon discover that they have the same favorite musical artist, and begin to connect. Eventually, Isaiah reveals that he has a similar power to Alex, except he looks into the past and relives traumatic events. Alex must race against time to figure out if there is a way to prevent his visions from becoming reality and repair his relationship with his brother.

Did the plot keep you interested?

The plot definitely kept me interested because there were many plot twists and the novel was full of suspense and mystery.

Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?

The pace of the novel started a bit slow, but the pace picked up and ended well.

What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?

This book is appropriate for grade levels 9 and up, as there are inappropriate scenes and strong language throughout the book.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

I would recommend this novel to anybody who enjoys science or realistic fiction.

What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?

This novel is told from the point of view of Alex.

I would rate *The Cost of Knowing* 5 stars because it was a very fun novel to read full of mystery, suspense, plot twists, and intense scenes. The book was paced well and had humor as well as more serious scenes. Overall, I really enjoyed this novel and would recommend it to anybody looking for a good science fiction novel.

Reviewer Name and Grade: Julianna V., 11th Grade

Date Reviewed: June 27, 2022

The novel *The Cost of Knowing* written by Britney Morris is about an African American sixteen-year-old boy named Alex Rufus. Although he has a stable job working at Scoop's ice cream shop and has a loving girlfriend, he is not like every other ordinary teenager. Ever since his parents' accident, Alex is able to see the future. Whenever he touches an item with his palm, he is able to know what will happen to that item in the future; for example, when he touched his girlfriend Talia, he was able to see their breakup. Although Alex tries to live his life like an ordinary teenager, his visions of the future give him anxiety which prevents him from living his best life and taking care of the ones he cares about such as Talia and his little brother, Isaiah. However, one day, when Alex touches a photo of his family, he sees Isaiah's imminent death. Before their parents' accident, Alex and Isaiah had a close relationship; they used to play basketball with their friend Shaun and they played Super Smash Bros. But after the accident, they drift apart and Isaiah isolates himself in his room from the rest of the world. The novel follows Alex's journey as he races against time to be the best big brother he can be; he tries to spend as much time with his brother as he can to make Isaiah's last days worthwhile. By spending time together, Alex discovers that Isaiah is more than just a kid who plays the game BeatBall and eats Lucky Charms and pizza bites all day; he discovers that they share many similar interests, especially their love of their favorite rap artists. Together, they also discover more about their family's history and more about Alex's powers, which help them establish a close connection. Along with the fear of knowing his brother's imminent death, he also has to face the harsh realities of living as a Black teenager in America in the present. The novel takes place in Chicago, Illinois, and explores the important themes about racism, family and friend relationships, bravery in the face of oppression, and love for others.

Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for nonfiction) keep you interested?

Yes; throughout the novel, the plot kept me interested and I wanted to continue reading to see what was going to happen next.

Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?

I believe the pace of this book was just right. Although many events took place throughout the novel, I felt that the author thoroughly explained everything without rushing the plot.

What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?

I think the grade levels 9th through 12th are appropriate for this book; throughout the book, the author explores mature topics and utilizes mature language, so I think it is best for a high schooler to read this book. Also, Alex, the main character, is sixteen years old, so I feel that teenagers and high schoolers are more likely to relate with him than other grade levels.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

I would recommend this book to a reader who likes fantasy because this book contains some magical elements, however, I feel that any reader would enjoy this book. Although this book contains fantastical elements, it also discusses important realistic topics such as bravery, anxiety, the death of loved ones, and love, and I feel that any reader can relate to at least one of these topics.

What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?

If someone is interested in reading this book, I would inform them that this book discusses mature topics, and at times, the book can be very depressing because it discusses the death of family and friends. Also, this book contains mature language. I would advise the reader to look up trigger warnings before reading this book. Although at times this book can be very depressing, it is a great read that teaches extremely valuable life lessons.

I would rate this book *4 stars: I enjoyed this book and found it worthwhile reading.* Going into this book, I had low expectations because I had never heard of it before and I did not know what other readers thought about the book, but the plot sounded interesting. Although this book was not the best book I have ever read, it did exceed my expectations. This book at times can be depressing because it discusses the death of family members and friends, but I loved seeing the close connection that Alex and Isaiah established. I also loved how Alex is very caring and loving to others such as his brother, his aunt, and his girlfriend. Furthermore, this book taught me very important life lessons. An important theme of this book is bravery in the face of oppression. Because of his power, Alex has anxiety and is afraid of many things and his brother has fear as well; however, together they learned how to face their fears. Also, this book discusses how Black teenagers are treated unfairly and are seen as criminals just because of their skin color. This book taught me to not act prejudiced or treat any person unfairly because of their skin color, and it taught me the importance of being brave and facing my fears. Although this book was sometimes depressing, the plot kept me interested and it taught me important life lessons. This book was a great read.